

Written Testimony – Hearings February 28, 2023

Subject: H.B. 5326 An Act Concerning the Affordable Housing Appeals Process

I am writing to express my support for House Republican proposal HB 5326, and other proposals (see below), that would make a series of changes to the State's 8-30g law regarding affordable housing in Connecticut. Section 8-30g subjects small, highly developed towns like my Town of New Canaan to unfair legal action from building developers. The proposed changes outline a comprehensive package of legislative proposals to increase the actual affordable housing stock in Connecticut over time with guidelines that empower municipalities with unique circumstances, like New Canaan. On behalf of constituents like me, Deputy House Republican Leader Tom O'Dea (R-125), is leading these proposed changes.

The proposed changes will address shortcomings in Connecticut state statute section 8-30g which provides inadequate guidelines for measuring affordable housing supply in municipalities across the state. The proposals will foster a wholistic approach to evaluating affordable housing in Connecticut and help unshackle towns with earnest development efforts.

The package of policy proposals will address two major goals:

1. Make statewide, affordable housing goals more achievable by granting municipalities more freedom to set guidelines according to their communities' unique needs; and
2. Foster an honest affordable housing development culture by incentivizing certain private and public investments in the best interest of residents and small, highly developed towns.

New Canaan and other similar towns throughout Connecticut have been required to live by restrictive and antiquated guidelines on affordable housing since 8-30g became law three decades ago. New Canaan and other similar towns have made significant investments in affordable units and have always balanced our collective goals to increase housing stock while protecting local control of development decisions. The proposals will level the playing field for our small towns and encourage continued growth.

Section 8-30g currently allows builders to take a municipality to court if it denies a proposed affordable housing development. Municipalities are currently protected from legal action if at least 10% of their total housing stock is deemed affordable by state guidelines. Currently, only 2.91% of New

Canaan's total housing stock meets the threshold, despite significant recent developments. Under the Republicans' proposals, naturally occurring affordable units would qualify and free eligible towns from legal action. The proposals detailed by House and Senate Republicans include:

- Incorporating existing properties that meet affordability standards ([HB 5326](#))
- Eliminating deed restrictions for owner-occupied affordable housing which restricts the ability to create equity ([HB 5326](#))
- Increasing municipal control over zoning by removing the deadline for opt out of the "as of right" accessory apartment requirements ([HB 5326](#))
- Granting municipalities a right of first refusal for set-aside housing developments ([HB 5783](#))
- Lowering the threshold in state statute for towns of up to 25,000 residents and are greater than 90% developed from 10% to 5% ([HB 5794](#))
- Including affordable housing developments built after a prior appeals moratorium to count towards total units ([SB 856](#))

I believe there is bipartisan support for changing the 8-30g housing law to increase local control over land use policies, and protect our towns and cities while advancing our affordable housing goals in a sustainable way.

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully submitted,

Anonymous

New Canaan, CT